



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

May 14, 2004

H.R. 3936

A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the principal office of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to be at any location in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, rather than only in the District of Columbia, and expressing the sense of Congress that a dedicated Veterans Courthouse and Justice Center should be provided for that Court and those it serves and should be located, if feasible, at a site owned by the United States that is part of or proximate to the Pentagon Reservation, and for other purposes

As introduced on March 11, 2004

H.R. 3936 would authorize the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) to locate its principal office anywhere in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Under current law, the principal office of the CAVC must be located in the District of Columbia. According to the CAVC, it currently has no plans to move from the current location in the District, nor are there plans to dedicate a Veterans Courthouse in the District of Columbia, or in the metropolitan area within the next five years. Therefore, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 3936 would not have any significant near-term effect on federal spending.

While the CAVC indicates it does not plan to move from its current location in the near future, the bill contains the sense of the Congress that appears to urge the CAVC to pursue acquiring a dedicated Veterans Courthouse and Justice Center at an appropriate site owned by the United States that is near or proximate to the Pentagon Reservation in Arlington, Virginia. In fact, according to the General Services Administration (GSA), the Court has begun the process of inquiry into a possible relocation at some point in time but GSA has not incorporated a specific project or funding in its five-year plan for CAVC relocation. GSA indicates that, once CAVC decides to relocate, the process of site acquisition and building design and construction could take about five years to accomplish and cost about \$35 million—\$1 million for project studies and site acquisition, \$6 million for building design, and \$28 million for building construction. If the CAVC chose to seriously pursue relocation during the next several years, it is possible that some or all this cost could occur over the 2006-2009 period, subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

H.R. 3936 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Dwayne M. Wright. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.